

# **Character-Building**

**A Practical Course**

By

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CHARACTER-BUILDING

A PRACTICAL APPROACH

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Conseguentiation

Moralia Terrible

The Gaudy Peasant (Transliteration)

CHARACTER-BUILDING

1. The Moral

A Good Book of Indian Citizenship: Senior

Indian Yoga

Notes on the Gaudy Peasant

CHARACTER-BUILDING

A TRADITIONAL COURSE

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## CHAPTER 1

## WHY YOU MUST DEVELOP CHARACTER

READER, why should you deliberately aim at the development of character? First, because you will never be satisfied or happy till you do, and secondly, because the game of life requires it of you as a duty. You are alive for a purpose, and somewhere within your consciousness you have a dim inkling of that fact; you are either seeking or expecting something whose lack leaves you without complete satisfaction. Your procession of little destinies, from to-morrow to next week, to next year, and to the end of life in this body, and your larger destiny to be fulfilled in unimaginable greatness in the future beyond that (in the course of rebirths on earth and life in other worlds), all lie in your own hands, and the coming of that greatness may even now be accelerated by the efforts that you make and those that you have made in the past—by no other thing.

No one can eat, learn, feel or think for you, nor develop your will-power or any other part of your character, though you may find environment a source of help or difficulty in your growth. As the power within a tiny seed determines the form, even to a detail, of the mightiest tree, so is the power within you, a mere seed of what shall be truly a man and even a god; and as no one can grow an oak tree from a mango seed, so no one and nothing in your environment can make you grow into something that you are not destined to be. There is something marvellous in the power within a seed, and when that seed is the

human soul containing the powers of will, thought and love, no one should dare to measure its possibilities by a puny and undeveloped imagination. With such powers within him, man must not depend upon external accidents for the food, water and sunshine necessary for his unstunted growth—it is for him to be his own gardener, to understand his own destiny and to make his circumstances assist him in its swift achievement.

It has been determined by your inmost self that you shall develop character, the powers of the soul, through effort and experience, and the quantity as well as the quality of your conscious life shall thus ever increase until it is too great for human limits. Abundant life is not chiefly to be found, however, in material quantity. You do not need enormous physical riches, any more than you want a huge body, like a giant in a story book ; but you do desire abounding *health* physically, emotionally and mentally, for these are the spiritual riches of freedom, love and truth. The spirit within measures its things by quality, not by quantity, and what will give you permanent joy will be not greater wealth nor power over others, nor the spread of your meaningless name in what people call extended fame, not longer bones and more abundant flesh, but more of character—realisation of freedom, love and truth in all their ramifications and modifications.

For those who aim at these things success is certain, for the power within the seed is on their side, while those who aim otherwise have their life-forces sapped by a constant struggle to hold what is perishing. And there is always this help, that what you have attained in character will soon reflect itself in your outer life. Material opportunities of all kinds will soon come to him who has determined to make the right use of his powers. Each thing that comes before him will be more significant and more useful to him than it would be to others. Life is a matter of degree, and there is as much difference between one man and another as there is between a fine horse and the earthworm which is blind and deaf. The external world is also different

for each of these. Character deals with circumstances and in the long run makes its own opportunities.

In the course of life your character undergoes constant modification. Every experience adds something of strength, insight or feeling. Every feeling and thought, however transient, makes its permanent mark in the growing character. But as environment plays upon it there is no such thing as the passive reception of modifications in consciousness, so that the mark that is made in the character by any experience is compounded of two distinct things—the outer event and the inner character that meets it. The result of the reaction between these two (which we may call an experience) produces two effects—a modification in the character of the man, and some change in the outer world.

It is the modification within, not the effect in the outer world, that we have to consider in our present study. You and I may go for a sea voyage, be wrecked in the same vessel and be rescued from the same boat. We may have had the same hunger and thirst, and buffetting and fatigue, but, believe me, our experiences have been widely different, because of the difference of character within. And one of us may have gained much more benefit than the other, more, that is, of strength or understanding or love built into the character, or rather brought out into it from within the soul as a permanent gain.

Life has never been and cannot be passive, and the growth in character of a human being will be swift or slow exactly according to what is put forth from within, which generally means effort—effort to act, to understand, to love; effort of working, of thinking, of devotion, or whatever it may be. To be passive is to be dead or asleep for the moment. Even in that religious devotion to God which has been practised by the most notable saints there was a constant active effort to open the mind and heart in devotion so that it might be conscious of the spiritual force or grace

that cannot flow into the closed minds of lazy, thoughtless and selfish men. Even in this extreme case there is no real passivity, but a positive active character is experiencing a modification when it blends within its own being with what for want of better expression must be called a downflow of spiritual force.

What is in the heart of the seed, in the depths of the soul, beyond anything that we are able to define as the character of the man, we can at present know little about, so for all practical purposes it is character that is the man, and the soul powers become known to us only when they appear in that. It is the character that is the man, and the only thing that can be called progress for him is its development.

Life will give you no permanent happiness until you recognise and obey this truth, and realise that life is for the development of character towards a destiny glorious beyond all present imaginings. A spiritual hunger will give you no rest, but will drive you on to this goal of human life. Success will follow success as you develop character in the material world, but ever new realms to conquer will open their vistas before you, and spiritual hunger will drive you on till you obtain the greatest fruit of life that human experience can grow, and beyond that something greater still.

It is the human destiny to achieve happiness not by the method of forgetfulness, like the sheep in the meadows that enjoy their simple pleasures and do not think of past or future, but by the method of will, understanding of life, and love, as beings co-operating with God in the work of evolution. We cannot go back and become sheep; it is ours to go forward by our own will-power and become gods.

Glance over the world of human endeavour with the question what it is for. Ever since the human form appeared on earth men have worked with their brains and hands, and with infinite labour have turned over the dust of the ground. They have scratched the

surface of the earth, gathered stones and iron, built cities and monuments, constructed languages and policies. All these have endured for a space and then gone for ever. But Greece, Rome, Chaldæa, Peru, Egypt and India live now in us. Their material triumphs have turned to dust, their languages are dead, but all the gain of character that was achieved by those ancient labours is ours now and for ever. It is not the work that matters, except for the sake of the workers, individually and collectively. All that exists does so, as an ancient Indian writing says, for the sake of the soul or the self within. Character is the important thing, and the development of character is the important work.

The world is but a school for all of us, but it is not a cramming institution. In it games play perhaps the greatest part, and most of its objects are merely educative toys, however seriously grown-up people may regard them. Even knowledge is not valuable for its quantity but only for its appositeness to the needs of your character or mine as leading us to a realisation of the truth about life. I knew a young man who had a great thirst for knowledge, and it was his habit to frequent a large reference library and study all kinds of subjects, in each of which he found absorbing interest. But after a while he grew despondent, for he realised that he could not gather the treasures even of this one library in less than four hundred whole lifetimes of close reading, for there were some half a million volumes in that library alone. That little calculation taught him that it was not the business of life to acquire knowledge, except such as is necessary in order that each of us may live truly, kindly and actively.

The toys of knowledge are endless in their variety, but realisation of the truth comes through the use of our powers of thought upon that bit of the world that happens to be ours, and living a life of love and activity according to that thought. Thinking about life is not living, and the thought that does not find some

positive use in my definite scheme of life is not of great benefit to me.

Each one has his daily destiny to fulfil ; certain knowledge is very important for him, and it is wisdom for him to seek the knowledge that he can best apply to his own life and to concentrate his mental power upon it so that, like the fabled swan of the Hindus, it may separate the milk of wisdom from the waters of knowledge. I have known little boys to boast that they had walked through every street of their particular town ; I have known travellers or rather tourists to rush on wheels through every celebrated country of the world ; but I am sure that he has learned the lesson of life better who has pursued his quiet occupation and moved abroad occasionally as a corrective and a change. A realisation of the truth about life may be had everywhere, and the means to its attainment (the very purpose of life) is indicated in that coarse old proverb that a fool cannot learn from a wise man, but a wise man can learn even from a fool.

Again, the lessons of the school of life do not result in accumulated texts of knowledge, but in character—in what you *are*. For business or social purposes I may learn Chinese or Latin to-day. I shall not want those languages for ever, but what I have gained in power by learning and using them will be mine for good. It is not accumulated experience that is of use in life—it is experience digested into character. Just as millions of details exist in our memory in some unimaginable unity, so does all our past thinking and willing appear in the sudden decision that we may make to-day. To each one of us there will come a day when the character within has reached a point of predominance at which it will suddenly say : I *realise* that my destiny is in my own hands and from this moment forward I will guide my life swiftly and surely to the appointed end of perfection.

Another pointer to the fact that the human being is required to work out his own destiny is to be seen

in the substitution of work and knowledge for the natural protection and instinct that we find in the lower kingdoms of nature. Animals are provided by nature with clothing for purposes of warmth, protection, beauty and camouflage. Man alone finds himself at the mercy of cold and heat, wind and rain, friends and enemies. But each animal is confined within certain climatic limits and other conditions outside of which it would be in danger of extinction from heat or cold or enemies; while enlightened man makes his own clothing, and the reward of his effort is that his freedom extends from the poles to the equator, as he can adapt his covering to all climates.

Civilised man, weak in proportion to his size, without natural weapons or protective covering, out-classed in all his senses and physical powers by various birds, animals, fishes and insects, can yet achieve more than any of them. He can see the minute by means of his microscope; hear the walking of a fly as though it were the galloping of a horse over a hard road by means of his microphone; see what is distant by his telescope; travel on earth at eighty miles an hour on his best railways; speed across the ocean against contrary winds and also travel in its depths, fly higher and swifter than any bird by means of his airships and flying machines; handle, construct and control tools, machines and engines and the powers of water, gas and electricity; communicate his ideas by means of a code of words; transmit his thoughts to a distance by means of telephone and telegraph; make marvellous calculations by machines and upon paper, and do many other things far beyond the reach of any other being in the physical world—and all these by virtue of his character. All this he can do because he has been put at a disadvantage which has induced him to develop his character—because in other words it is his business to take his destiny into his own hands.

The time will come when those who now achieve their triumphs in wood and brass and iron will learn,

as the Indian yogis have long taught us—that there is another field of still greater achievement within the human mind, where powers can be developed beyond anything attainable with external means. No doubt, even in the material world man will soon achieve greater triumphs than those of the present. "Everything," said a philosopher, "becomes fluid to thought," and most probably in the course of time it will be in the power of some of us to remove the Himalayas from their seats and place them elsewhere if we wish. We are but at the A. B. C. of human power. All the types of machines that have yet been made are but imperfect copies of portions of our bodily instrument, and all the forces that we use will presently be found to be feeble beside the powers in the soul.

## CHAPTER II

## WHAT CHARACTER IS

CHARACTER is the stamp or mark of the soul expressed in life. Meditate for a moment upon your place in the series of events that we call life and you will find that every impulse that comes from the outer world is dealt with by an inner man who feels and thinks (however briefly) about it, and then forms a decision which passes into action; so that this inner man has exerted some directive influence upon the flow of events in the outer world. They are different because they have passed through him.

You may divide your life into two parts—an inner man who holds his own balance while he feels, thinks and acts; and an outer world, including the body with all its demands and needs. In the life of a stone the outer is all, so far as we are able to see. Many plants show a little character, animals more, and primitive men more still. Civilised man shows character now and then, but it is the enlightened man, in whom the inner life is ruler of his body and environment, adapting all circumstances to his own purpose, whom we may rightly call a man of character—one who is great inside, in whom soul force is greater than the force of bodily habit and environment. Such character will make itself apparent in all the little incidents of life whether the man is living from day to day without a plan but according to set principles, as many people of character do, or is working for a definite goal of achievement. To sum up—a man of character *lives from within* and makes his mark upon

his little world, and he is therefore both great and good.

Examples of men of character can be found in every walk of life. Thousands of historical and contemporary names could be cited, but for every one whose name has become popularly known there are hundreds of others, equally great and almost as great, who have fought their battles of love and thought and action away from the public gaze, often with nothing to show outside. Such are many of those who have sacrificed the ease and comfort of life to pursue their ideals—the young writer who feels within him the beauty of literature and poetry, and would rather starve in a garret with his muse than live in comfort without it; the merchant honest under difficulties; the lawyer truthful in the face of temptation; the inventor who gives time and purse, and often limb and life, in devotion to his idea. Each one of these has had a glimpse within his own soul of some great possibility, and has become a devotee to that.

Think, for example, of the men who have devoted themselves during the last thirty years to the achievement of human flight. All the earlier ones sacrificed the comfort and safety of a home life, and one after another met with serious injury or cruel death in the course of his experiments. Worse than this, they had to face the ridicule of their fellow men—learned and ignorant alike. But they held to their ideal and kept their balance through all these trials, and at last succeeded in giving to mankind the aeroplane, which is already playing a great part for good and ill in the history of mankind.

Or think of the life story of Prince Gautama, who became the Buddha, “who made our Asia mild”. As a young man he was surrounded with everything that men desire. He had a loving and beautiful wife, splendid palaces and gardens, good health and intelligence, prospects of lordship over a prosperous and contented kingdom to be derived from a devoted

father. But on several occasions he happened to witness scenes of suffering, disease and death; and this sorrow of others sank deep into his soul, and sent him forth to seek its cause and the means by which it might cease. Such was his spiritual insight that he *knew* by unquestionable and unsilenceable intuition that there must be a solution to the problem of human misery, and this would not let him, like an ordinary man, sink down before the difficulty and accept the apparently inevitable with a shrug of regret and helplessness, determined only to shield from sorrow those near and dear to him as far as might be. It was the spiritual vision of the sure triumph of right over all wrong and of man over all sorrow that led him to renounce all comforts and pleasures and material security that stood in the way of his search for enlightenment in the outer field of nature by his wanderings, and in the depth of his own soul by unyielding meditation, and resulted in the Buddhist religion, which even to-day comforts and guides five hundred millions of humanity, one-third of the human race.

Such is the loyalty that you must render to the soul within, dimly as you may perceive its longings in these early days of its ascendancy.

What comes out of the soul must be good as well as great, for inside that sanctuary understanding, will and love all work together for a common end. All truly human life is great and good. It is when we forget ourselves (and become predatory animals plus human knowledge) that greatness and goodness leave us, whatever noise we may make in the world. Napoleon was a man of character—not always, but in spasms, and on account of his frequent forgetfulness his greatness and goodness deserted him and ruined his career. If he had not forgotten himself, his genius would have brought him to the front in another way and made him one of the greatest benefactors of the human race.

Nothing can be more important at the beginning of a practical course in the building of character than a

firm resolution to look for the light within and try to obey it when it is recognised, even in the face of grave difficulty.

A good story has been told about a negro slave in one of the Southern States of America who was the proud possessor of a new hat. One rainy day a friend met him carrying this precious article under his coat, and on asking him why he did this curious thing received the reply that the hat would get wet if he put it on his head. "But is not your head getting wet?" queried the friend. "Truly," replied Sambo, "but the head belongs to master, while the hat belongs to *me*." This is the unconscious philosophy of a great number of the human race who are desperately anxious about comparatively unimportant things, but care little for the welfare of the eternal man. Because of this habit their lives are full of anxiety, and they have lost faith in the truth that if they sought first the will of the self within, the less important outer things would come within their reach when necessary for its purpose and the fulfilment of their duty in the world.

*Exercise 1. First week.* Sit down for contemplation of the self as described in detail in chapter xi of *Concentration: A Practical Course*, and try especially to realise the distinction between the self within, the world without, and the instrument or body that connects the two. Resolve that at some future time you will give yourself in complete devotion to the inner man, and that during the coming day you will at least try to deal with events in full loyalty to it.

*Exercise 2. Second week.* Each morning think over the things which may probably occur during the day to throw you off your balance of serene judgment, unfailing kindness and calm decision. Picture their concrete occurrence in vivid imagination and see yourself as passing through them without disturbance, but as the self within would wish. Then, during the day occasionally recall this meditation and try to act according to it.

The exercises that are given in this course are not intended to be practised for a long time so that they become monotonous, but for the week or two in which they are taken up they should be done with really earnest concentration. They will then permanently affect the character to a marked degree, and as a result of that will bring the student to a new platform, or to a higher rung of the ladder of progress, from which he will be well able to see what to do next.

## CHAPTER III

## PREPARING THE GROUND

YOU have now to prepare the ground on which your building of character is to be raised, and in this our previous analysis of man into two parts will be particularly helpful. First consider the personal man, made up of the body with its characteristics, and a collection of habitual desires and thoughts developed mainly for its satisfaction throughout life. What is this personal self to you but an opinion of yourself that you have formed by contact with the world, looking, as it were, in the mirror of life, listening to the opinions of others about you, noticing their treatment of you, finding out your own abilities and disabilities, considering your appearance as compared with that of other people?

Behind that personality is the real man, capable of thinking, loving, willing, and expanding his consciousness to illimitable perfection. When the real man begins to show himself in the life of the personal man, character appears; as he increases in power character develops more and more; but you have to consider at the beginning the condition of the personal man, for he forms the ground on which your building is to be raised.

There are three characteristics of all forms in the material world: they are composed of matter, and have thus the quality of stability; they contain force in latent or active form, and have thus the quality of energy; they are subject to some law which limits their mass and motion and gives them shape and size and other qualities of form. These three qualities—

stability, energy, and lawfulness—are to be found in the atom itself, and in the most perfectly organised form on earth, to wit, the human body, of which you possess one specimen, as well as in all things between the two.

You have now to see that your personal self has attained all three of the qualities in abundant measure; if it has not you are little likely to take active interest in the subject-matter of this little book. Stability you should have developed thousands of years ago in earlier bodies that loved to lie idly in the shade of palm or banyan when the day's work was done, when you learned to love the things that are, and deeply disliked all changes and the inconvenience of the effort of adaptation that they brought. Later on energy began to increase until excitement and adventure became the very spice of life; and later still you realised that you were part of a world of law and order, and did not live simply for your own enjoyment of ease and excitement, but that there were rules for eating and drinking, sleeping and waking, activity and rest, intercourse and solitude—in fact, that life was subject to laws, and in obedience to the natural laws of life the greatest pleasure was to be found. Then you became a virtuous member of civilised society, harmonising your life to that of the cosmos about you.

Here is the danger now. If you have so purified the personality that it is able to yield obedience to the inner man because it has become subject to law, make sure before you begin the work of building character that you have not lost the virtues that formed the backbone of the vices of laziness and excitability, which are stability and energy. There is little use in being what is commonly called a good man, one obedient to the laws of health and social and individual morality, unless you have preserved the stability and energy of the earlier stages of growth. Feeble goodness is a poor thing at best, and goodness purchased at the cost of strength and energy is a delusion and a snare. There is much truth in the old proverb,

"the greater the sinner, the greater the saint," for the sinner has often stability and energy that in the days of repentance will be used to great purpose in obedience to the laws of life. Purification of the personal man is not to be done by suppression of positive powers, but by their development to greater heights in obedience to the healthy laws of individual and social life.

Consider now the inner man working in the purified and obedient personality. There are some things in man that can be but dimly seen because of the glare of daily life. Just as the sky is studded with stars by day as well as by night, but their points of light cannot be seen in the glare of daylight unless one looks up at them from the depths of a deep well or mine which excludes a great quantity of light; so in the human soul there is a spiritual light unknown amid the glare of daily life, but visible to the mind's eye in the depths of meditation, when the activities of daily life and the emotions and thoughts connected with them are for the moment still.

No man acts from his judgment ultimately—all act from impulse or emotion or intuition—from the impulse of the body and mind, the emotions awakened by desire, or those fine intuitions giving both information and command that can make themselves heard only when the personality is silent, except, as the character develops, that they now and then speak in the mind with a clear, bodiless voice to their obedient and grateful servant struggling in the outer world.

This that we call intuition is a faculty in the spiritual depths of the soul, whereby information comes without sensation or judgment, and direction is given to life—but it is only valuable to him who has predetermined nothing and will accept with joy and perfect willingness any message or command from that inner source. It is small and quiet now because man is not far evolved. In time it will grow and flood the whole nature so that the thinking mind will fall into the second place as its humble servant in the human economy; just as the

little seed of judgment in the animal soul hidden amidst a mass of natural impulses and desires, develops into the ruler in the human mind, co-ordinating and controlling impulse and desire. This intuition will come in different forms to all types of men of character by their sinking occasionally into the well of meditation until they see above them the star-studded vault.

*Exercise 3. Third week.* Taking care that there is no strain in the body which would produce a frown, a stiffness of the neck or anything of the kind, sit with the eyes closed and make a mental picture of your body. Then think of your feelings and thoughts about the things of your world, so as to form a more complete mental image of your own personality. Gradually drop the physical body out of your thought and keep your attention upon the emotional and mental part of your personality. Then drop the emotions and simply look at your thoughts. Finally calm down those thoughts and quietly look as it were into the vacant place with hopeful expectancy of some glimmering of what is within. When it comes it will bring you joy and irradiation of the mind. Do not try to grasp it—that cannot be done—but keep the mind open and turned to it until it falls away, which it will do very soon. In order to receive intuitions the mind must be free from desire for a particular result—or indeed for any result at all—and from prejudice. It must be willing to receive anything that comes, and to obey it willingly and happily.

Equally important is the development of a permanent mood during the day. The flow of your thought with reference to every object that you meet in the course of daily life depends upon your mood. This has been carefully explained in the second chapter of *Concentration*. Examine the thoughts and feelings that pass through your mind in a single day, or even in a single hour, and you will probably find that your personality is extremely discrete and incoherent. The mind is like a river carrying on its surface innumerable bits of wreckage of your many past plans and

schemes and experiences—odds and ends picked up from the banks, floating for a while and then sinking to the bottom or being drifted out of the stream on to the banks again. All these odds and ends must be gathered together into the net of a permanent mood. Put in another way, the mind is like a pot of boiling water, bubbling and breaking into a thousand trifling emotions and thoughts in the course of an hour. But for the development of character you require a mind steadily controlled by a permanent mood, so that every incoming and uprising thought and emotion may be polarised to that. Just as an architect interested in his profession, passing through the streets of a city, notices the detail of every structure that he sees, because of his prevailing habit of thought about such things; just as a new mother notices babies wherever she goes; just as a new motor-cyclist sees the make and condition of every other machine that passes him, so must you see during the practice of this course the significance of every thing and event that occurs to you in the light of its effect on the building of the character, because of the prevailing mood which you will set up at this stage of the work.

*Exercise 4. Fourth week.* Review the probable events of the coming day and, as you look at each thing in turn, consider what its effect will be upon your character—how it will effect your quality of courage, of truth and of love. Resolve that it shall be used for the building of your character, that is, for the development of these three qualities.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THE FOUNDATIONS**

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FOUNDATIONS

If you have decided to take a distinct step in the development of your own character, so as to raise it from its present platform to another distinctly higher, you must first realise that the work that you have set yourself is one of definite building, as precise and orderly as that of building a house. If you had that work in hand you would have to proceed deliberately, collecting and shaping your various materials, and building them carefully and systematically into a definite plan. At the outset you would have to consider three main portions of the building, which are the essential parts of almost every building in the world—the foundations, the walls and the roof.

There is one quality which lies at the root of all successful and permanent development of character, and that is courage, and this should form the foundation of your building of character. You must realise what courage is, not so much in the abstract, or in the deeds of distant heroes, as in your own life, whatever it may be. There is scarcely one other quality among all those that make up human character which does not take its security from this quality of courage. A little child tells its first lie when it is cornered by parents or teachers, under the influence of fear. The young lawyer admits his first doubtful evidence under the fear of loss of reputation or success and, behind that, poverty and insecurity of life for himself and family. The merchant first falls from honesty from the same cause. In schools almost all over

the world for a long time past children have been driven to study under the rule of fear, whether of the rod, harsh words, ridicule, or failure to pass the barriers of examinations and consequent obstruction for life, and the result has been such an undermining of character that the average citizen can be relied upon not to support his convictions with courage, but to barter them for comfort and security on the one hand or fame and glory on the other. In popular electioneering how common is the appeal to personal and class advantage; how seldom is there an exhortation to hold fast to those things which are best, no matter what the personal sacrifice may be.

Fear is a retrograde emotion, which not only undermines character, as has been said above, but stops probably more than ninety per cent of the original and progressive work which men are capable of doing, and throws them back constantly upon old methods of work, old social customs and old religious bondages. You have only to examine your own life to find to what a large extent you are leaning upon others—a practice which is fatal to the development of great strength of character. You may have beauty of character if your emotions are kind and good, but that is not sufficient for the making of a man or woman, and it is extremely doubtful how it would stand the pressure of really trying circumstances. Tolstoy has pointed out in his book *My Religion* how grateful people are in their weakness to others upon whom they are permitted to lean, especially in matters of religion, which deals with the deeper problems and ultimate ends of life. Because of this weakness people will cling desperately to illogical beliefs which are shared by many others, and if these are assailed, will fight with the fury of an animal for the props which are sustaining their miserable life.

All that sort of thing must go once and for all if you have determined to build your own character. While you are laying your foundation of courage you will probably have to strike away a great many props and

work hard to replace them by conscientious principles of your own. It is not for yourself alone that this work is necessary. Every step forward in the progress of society has been begun by a man of character who has had the courage to face social and religious tyranny, and we have already seen what part courage has played in the discovery of inventions and the development of science and philosophy. Indeed, if we enjoy to-day any of the blessings of liberty, it is because there have been brave and wise men who have fought with tongue, pen and sword against selfishness and greed, in order that men might be free from slavery, and be permitted to live on land and cultivate it, to carry on manufactures and trades, to travel about, to follow their chosen religion and to enjoy the fruits of their labour without molestation and deprivation. In public and in private life, in large affairs and in small, courage is the foundation of success. It may be for this reason that Sri Krishna, in giving to Arjuna a list of the divine qualities, that is to say the qualities which make for human progress towards divinity, places courage first of all.

There are, then, several practical things that you must do. First of all you must work under difficulties, for they are the one thing which can aid you. It is not necessary to make difficulties, for life has been so arranged that every one receives a reasonable number of them without that. It would be unwise to rush into great difficulties, just as it would be foolish to start physical exercises with dumb-bells weighing ten pounds each. There is a certain moderation in which growth can be best obtained. Next, try to realise that the things that are considered pleasant are as much trials for the character as those from which we shrink. Riches are as dangerous as poverty, and health is even more of a test than disease. As the world is a school for the development of character; each of these things must be valued for that purpose, without undue regard to what is pleasant and disagreeable. Then, you must have faith in life. There are no barriers to success but those which exist within yourself.

*Exercise 5. Fifth and sixth weeks.* Sit down quietly each morning and dwell upon the quality of courage. Think of anything that may probably occur during the coming day which would be disagreeable to you, which you would shrink from on account of shyness, fear of ridicule, laziness, or mistrust of your own powers. Picture the incident very clearly. Then decide calmly what you really ought to do in the matter, putting aside all question of fear. Complete the picture by imagining yourself in it as actually doing the thing upon which you have now decided. When the incident does crop up, try to act as you have decided, but do not waste your energy in vain regrets if you happen to fail. Just begin again.

*Exercise 6. Fifth and sixth weeks.* Whenever you have commanded your body to do anything, see that it does it, unless you have a good reason to change your purpose. If, for example, you have fixed a time for rising on any day, see that no laziness or sluggishness is permitted to delay it, and allow no breach of rule for a reason less deliberate than that which made it. If you have decided to purchase some trifling thing while in town, and on your return you find that you have carelessly overlooked the matter, make your body go back and get the thing, brooking no excuse or rebellion.

*Exercise 7. Sixth and seventh weeks.* Every day do something, however trifling, that is contrary to your regular habits, preferably something useful, of course. If you are addicted to novels, do some hard study ; if you are very fond of your food, leave out a meal, or try dry bread and water ; if you are a feverish worker, put in a lazy time.

The whole purpose of these exercises is to develop courage and self-control and bring your will into activity. Good habits are very valuable because they leave energy for higher things, but to allow them entire control of life is to weaken the foundation of your building.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WALLS

WE come now to the second essential part of your building—the walls which stand upon the foundations and support the roof. There are two very important features of the walls of a building that is to be both lofty and safe—they must be absolutely straight and true, and their material must be of good quality without serious flaws. Some of the new buildings in the United States rise to a height of about nine hundred feet, and it is a matter of the greatest interest to know that the walls are in many places but a few inches in thickness. Thick walls of brick of such a height would be destroyed by their own weight, for the upper part of the wall pressing upon the bricks below would crumble them to powder. But the fine steel ribs of those great buildings, erected with perfect accuracy in the perpendicular, are safe for far more than the load that is put upon them. In all such building it is quality that is important, not quantity.

What is it in character that corresponds to these walls? It is the virtue of truth. If your building of character is to rise high and strong, its walls must be upright and steady with perfect truth. A great quantity of knowledge within the mind is not necessary, but what there is should be accurate. You must make your ideas clear cut and decided, and see that they are not vitiated by personal desires.

For success in this work you must desire truth above everything else, with the desire that is first of all a willingness to know things exactly as they are, not

coloured by your desire that they should be something different. Here wishing, as is explained in "*Concentration*" is a cause of great weakness. You must try to find out exactly where you stand with respect to different qualities as compared with other people, decide what you want next, and then use your will to put that decision into effect. In this examination you may find that your walls are not true, that you have in this or that small matter distorted or weakened them by dishonesty or hypocrisy or some other such thing, or that you have built into them some rotten material on account of self-deception, which has raised them too high.

It is for you now, with perfect indifference to pleasure or pain, to pull down that rotten and bad work and begin again on a good foundation of courage. You must not wish that anything should be in the least different from what it is, but be anxious to know things exactly as they are, without the least regard for your own comfort or self-satisfaction in any way whatever. If you build without this fundamental honesty, your walls can never be high and strong. Every faulty brick that you put in, every piece of careless workmanship, will endanger the entire structure, and surely bring you much trial and struggle at some future time. Put in familiar language, every piece of deception, whether self-deception or deception of others, will lead to lie after lie in thought, word and action, until the whole structure comes crashing to the ground. Do not be eager for a great quantity of knowledge or achievement. Be anxious about the quality, and thus build your character according to the gravity of the spiritual law of truth.

The work of self-examination is extremely difficult, for it is quite possible that you may belong to one of those two unfortunate classes of people—those who habitually over-rate their own powers, and those who habitually under-rate them. If you belong to the former class you will put the best construction upon your thoughts and acts, and if to the latter you will put the

worst. There is only one way out of this difficulty : you must get yourself during the time of judgment into a condition of what is called vairagya among the Hindu yogis. The word means detachment, that the mind in its judgment shall not be discoloured or agitated by personal desires arising from its attachment to pleasures or fear of pains. During self-examination you must put all wishes aside, and make your calm judgment as upon a person in whom you take no interest whatever.

After this a general habit may be set up of honesty towards yourself. Many people have a tendency to overvalue their own possessions or undervalue others for their own self-satisfaction. Thus the average man thinks his own religion is better than other peoples, with no shadow of reason for his opinion. The book-worm despises athletics and the athlete despises the book-worm. The young lover thinks his sweetheart the most delightful being on earth, and the young mother that her baby is the most wonderful, unless its defects are most uncommonly obvious. "It would not do," said Mr. A., "for every one to think alike, for if they did, they would all have wanted to marry my wife." "Quite so," returned Mr. B., "and if they had thought as I do, no one would have married her." Some people pride themselves on being professional, others on being business, men. Some ladies like to be Victorian and others modern, while many who have thick ankles are quite sure in their own minds that the modern short skirt is extremely immodest. But lying to oneself does not increase happiness in the long run.

There is another form of allegiance to truth in the mode of doing work. There is only one kind of work that will do, and that is what is called honest work, which is work with an eye to quality rather than quantity. Every time that you do a piece of work better than you have done it before, as for example a piece of writing, you have trained hand, nerve, eye and brain, and developed some additional power of

self-control and will. But if you did the work a thousand times in the same old style with no effort at improvement, you would have gained nothing but a facility produced by habit. Facility is not a thing of great value to the soul, though it has its convenience in the world, and it may even lead one astray, as in the case where facility of words tempts one to speak too much without sufficient thought.

Criticism by others can also be used as a great help to self-training. Instead of receiving it with annoyance and irritability because perhaps it obstructs your work in the outer world, it is worth while to examine it for the germ of truth that it nearly always contains.

Then comes the question of truth in relation to others. Deception not only corrupts one's own character, but also undermines society. If a person is once deceived, he tends to look for deception elsewhere. Mistrust and suspicion arise, and social progress is shattered. Railways for the use of everybody are only possible because people can be trusted not to cut and damage the carriage furnishings, and if only society had reached a sufficient stage of advancement the State could provide thousands of motor cars for the convenience of the public and leave them standing at corners for anybody to use, quite sure that nobody would do so unless he had serious business and would and could take the utmost care of the machines. All social progress depends upon the development of the social consciousness and its attendant conscience, and this in turn upon mutual trust, and he who proceeds to corrupt society by untruth is sure to receive his reward of being distrusted and deceived. There are few or no cases in which deception is *permissible*. I know the case of a hospital patient to whom the nurses lied in order to assuage his delirium. After a little time he found out that their words were not true and began to regard them as sinister, with the result that there was great struggle and difficulty and a serious relapse; and it cannot but be that patients generally misunderstand their doctors to a large extent, because they very often believe that

the latter are in the habit of concealing the truth. There are many kind people who would sacrifice truth to kindness, but undoubtedly that policy leads to greater sorrow on the whole and in the long run.

In relation to the world around us, another form of allegiance to truth is an open mind, and a willingness to see greatness anywhere, not only in those things and persons which have been labelled by society and religious bodies. We never know where the next thing will rise that is going to revolutionise the world for good. No one could have expected in the humble pit-head mechanic, George Stephenson, the channel for great ideas and the will and character to carry them out against the most appalling difficulties of poverty and organised opposition—ideas which have absolutely revolutionised the whole world, economically and politically. No one would have thought, looking at the small band of twenty-eight Rochdale Pioneers in the beginning of their little economic movement, that there was the seed of a movement which would later have millions of adherents and lead on perhaps to a fundamental readjustment of society on a co-operative basis before many more decades pass away. It is always the same story, that great things rise in the world from the most obscure and unexpected places, but invariably through people of sterling character, of strong will and insight and love for their fellows in the little world that happens to be theirs.

*Exercise 8. Eighth week.* Set aside fifteen minutes each evening to examine selected portions of the day's actions and conversations. Go over them again in thought, and calmly judge the extent to which they were intended to deceive oneself or others. Resolve that such injurious untruth shall cease, and observe that silence is better than untruthful or injurious speech.

*Exercise 9. Eighth and ninth weeks.* Take up some small piece of artistic work, such as a few bars of music or a small sketch, or write a few lines—better than you have ever done it before. Do this each day.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ROOF

THE chief purpose of the roof of a building is to protect those who are within from rain and dew, and from the too great heat of the sun. It is therefore but natural that we should take it as the symbol of the quality of love which, understood in a general way and apart from all sentimentality, means unselfish motive. It is constantly becoming more widely realised that humanity is one, indeed that those qualities that we regard as the distinctively human ones are those which are opposed to struggle and competition. It is realised now that co-operation is the law of human progress, and that a benefit to any man reacts upon the whole of humanity so that what has been called the solidarity of man is an established fact in social science; and we know that it is only selfishness, based upon ignorance, or the law of the animal still lingering in human affairs, which prevents mankind from reaching immediately a social and economic millennium.

When you begin the work of roofing in your building, you have first of all to see that your motives are not selfish, that is to say that they do not direct you to purposes which are definitely injurious to others or tending towards their degradation. If you aim, for example, at increase of what is commonly called wealth, money and property, which resolve themselves into power over the lives and fortunes of others less successful or more unfortunate than yourself, it can only be on the ground that it is done for

the purpose of general benefit. It must also be remembered that every one requires liberty for the development of his powers, so that in no case is the pursuit of power permissible to any great extent. It is not by exerting power over others that we can help them most, but by causing them to awaken their own powers.

All desire to see other people happy and well provided with the things that they need leads to emotions of love, which vary to an enormous extent, from the great compassion of a mother for her helpless little child, through the friendship of comrades, to the reverence and devotion that people pay to God. In all these cases there is a unity of interest so strong that the material barriers of self seem to be transcended and the hidden unity which is perceived by spiritual intuition impresses itself (generally quite unconsciously) upon the emotional nature. I have known of a case of this sense of unity becoming for a moment so strong that one person observing a fly settle on the nose of another tried to knock it off his own. Those who have had first glimpses of their existence on earth in previous lives also often have a curious realisation of the self as independent of a particular form. I know one case of a man who suddenly saw a vision of himself in the form of an Indian woman who lived long ago. The sensation was describable as that of one recognising oneself in a mirror. This man realised that that woman was himself with exactly the same sensation that he knew himself when he looked into a mirror and saw the reflection of his present body.

Unselfish emotion, therefore, does not mean martyrdom for the self. It means that the personal consciousness is becoming more exalted so that it can expand itself in the life of others instead of in the multiplicity of material things to be used for the very temporary enjoyment of its own body. This means an accession of life and happiness, for while material pleasures quickly die away, there is no limit to the

spiritual happiness that comes from love, from progressive realisation of truth and from creative work.

Every religious teacher, coming among a people torn by ignorance and strife, has affirmed this law, that the life of kindness and helpfulness is the only one that can lead to lasting happiness. They have all worked to spread peace among men so as to bring about a unity of the people. The lives of Christ and Muhammad are full of this effort and teaching. The Lord Buddha taught that hatred ceaseth not by hatred at any time, but ceaseth only by love, and Sri Krishna, speaking in the *Bhagavad-Gita* as the Divine Lord, explains that there was no reason why He should descend into the world and work unceasingly, for there was no duty that He was bound to do and no thing that He desired, but if He did not perform action, others following Him would cease from action, others in ever descending series would follow their example and the social order would fall into ruin. Immediately upon that explanation He exhorts Arjuna to work without personal desire, as other great men had worked before him, desiring only the unity of the people (*loka sangrahah*). Here is the implication that the Divine Lord loved the human race and therefore moved to preserve it from ruin.

The work of building character at this stage consists first of all in examining one's motives and putting them under the law of love. Secondly, the emotions have to be trained, and any one which is akin to anger or hatred or cruel pride or selfish fear must be converted into one of friendliness or benevolence or reverence so that it may work no injury in the outer world to the other person, or in the mind to yourself. How this may be done in detail will be seen in the chapter on the science of the emotions. Here only one thing needs to be said. There is a little key by one turn of which any unkind or unloving emotion may be converted into one of kindness, for the strengthening of yourself and the improvement of outward relationships. The turning of that key requires

a simple act of will in the controlling of your thought. You must stop thinking of your own consciousness and think instead of that of the person who has awakened the undesirable emotion in you.

If, for example, you have suddenly a feeling of proud contempt for another who may be more degraded than yourself, you may, by ceasing to contemplate your own superiority with self-satisfaction, transfer your centre of consciousness to the other's mind so as to realise in some measure what he is thinking and feeling, and your contempt will turn to compassion and a desire to lift him up. If your friend has in a moment of anger said something wounding to your feelings, you will turn that little key and see how for the moment the world appears to him, so sympathise with some trouble that has disturbed his mind, and respond with perfect friendliness instead of anger. If your chief is particularly short with you one morning, instead of going away in fear and self-pity you will realise that he has been much annoyed by some incident that perhaps had nothing at all to do with you. You will perhaps realise the difficulty of his position of greater responsibility, and your own unworthy emotion will be converted into admiration for one who bears great responsibilities with comparatively little loss of balance.

*Exercise 10. Tenth week.* Be on the look out for occasions on which you feel any form or degree of (a) unkind pride, (b) hatred, or (c) fear. Deliberately pause when the occasion comes, stop thinking of your own feelings, and think of the feelings and thought of the person who has offended you. Observe the sudden change in yourself.

*Exercise 11. Eleventh week.* Give some time to the study of your motives for various actions.

CHAPTER VII

THE VERANDAH

LIVING alone within the building that you have erected, you may have developed great qualities of courage, truth and affection, yet your house may appear to the visitor somewhat stern and forbidding in aspect. You know that it is fair within, but if the exterior is left plain and square, without any ornaments or graduation into its surroundings, it is only to be expected that others will not recognise that fairness within, and you will be to some extent shut out from that intercourse with them which ought to be pleasant and profitable to you and them alike.

We have therefore to consider at this point the verandahs and pleasant entrances to your house by means of which it may be tempered to the climate and rendered agreeable to all who pass by. Your verandah must be an Indian one, where every passing traveller can tether his horse, find sweet water for his use, and lay himself down for refreshment in the heat of the day or for restful sleep at night.

The exterior of your life, that is to say, must be rendered pleasant and inviting with whatever beauty of form, grace, manners and bearing you may find to be appropriate in your place and time. However retiring you may be by disposition, you will in this way do much good to others and gain still more for yourself. Most people, indeed, will never know you, but will only enter upon the verandah of your life

and character, where that which is within may overflow in constant cheerfulness and good humour and thus present those prepossessing qualities which facilitate success and progress in friendship, and indeed in all the outward affairs of life.

Without this you may have great qualities and still be an ungainly member of society, and this will react in two ways, as much living alone nearly always does. It will develop great strength in particular directions, but leave great weaknesses in the character as companions to the great virtues, and it will leave you eccentric, awkward and disagreeable in social relationship. On the other hand, one who spends his time in the midst of the society of his fellows, thinking but little about self-preparation for the future but always trying to make himself agreeable, becomes an all-round character, very pleasant as a social companion, though possessed of no great strength of character and showing no great defects.

These two types of people consciously or unconsciously obey the two paradoxical behests of religion everywhere—that a man should make great efforts to improve himself, and that he should grow as the flower grows—“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” There will always be some people who are lilies of the field, fitting perfectly into their social environment, gifted with ease of manner and expression, and feeling no strain upon life because there is no great difference between the inner and the outer man, between ideals and conduct. These people are bright, dependable, likeable, useful in an established order, but they have generally no great originality and feel no call to dispute established customs or to decide anything anew. They live mainly on the verandah, and it is well for them if they have the company of the great and good, if they work with

them, live with them, play with them, and "grow as the flower grows, opening its heart to the sun".

Only one warning is necessary at the close of this subject—to avoid the methods of a certain class of people who have hidden purposes of self-satisfaction and pride within, but cultivate society and friends for their own fame or selfish gain. These are not lilies of the field but dangerous weeds, and for the time being they are off the track, for true human progress requires that when we associate with others we shall do so primarily for their benefit and with a view to the fulfilment of their needs, not for the advancement of our own. Even if you help another, it is not important that you are the helper but that he is being helped.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE GARDENS

IN the midst of this strenuous work there is need of outward health and what follows upon a well balanced life, suppleness and beauty of character and form. In this physical world your work cannot be highly successful, except in a narrow way, unless time is reserved for play, which is called recreation by many elders who do not realise that the whole of life is but the play of God. Hence the need of a garden round your house, where you can at odd times lie about and dream, or run about and play.

The characteristics of play are two. It gives us the pleasure of using our powers and enjoying healthy sensations, and it stops short at the point when fatigue becomes uncomfortable. The delight of riding a good bicycle, for example, gives us a feeling of added power, which comes from the smooth and swift gliding motion, the exhilarating sensation of air rushing past and objects flitting by, and the enhanced glow of life in the body on account of the healthy vigorous exercise. If we are tempted to go a long distance we may become very tired on the return journey; then all pleasure disappears and we only wish that we were back at home. It is no longer play; it is drudgery, because we have to continue making efforts beyond the point of healthy tiredness. Walking, running, jumping, skipping, swimming, singing, and various kinds of ball games such as cricket, football, tennis and golf, and the Indian games of dodging and catching are all favourite forms of play. They give

us the pleasure of using physical power and skill, and create a healthy physical glow unless they are overdone.

It is a good rule in play as in eating, to stop before you are fully satisfied. All creatures that are not by nature sluggish and are not overworked or underfed share with mankind this delight in play, which is so necessary for the health of the body that two or three hours may well be given to it each day. We see young lambs and calves frisking about in the fields and hear the birds enjoying themselves with song, and those who are familiar with wild monkeys will have noticed what delight they take in chasing one another among the trees and gambolling together on the ground, pulling one another's tails and jumping and leaping over one another's heads. The life of animals is generally so well arranged that work and recreation are one for them, and there is no hurry or strain, and each detail of both work and play is interesting because of its complete relation in life. But deliberate play is necessary especially for those who are engaged in sedentary work, which generally tires the eyes and nerves and leaves the muscles weak and flabby. Physical exercises that can be done in the home are necessary also for toning up the system of the sedentary worker. A selection of these, specially selected for constitutional improvement has been given in *Concentration*, Chapter IV.

The brain also requires recreation, especially when it is tired owing to ill-balanced living, and under these circumstances relief may be obtained by reading stories and good novels with light emotional interest of love, adventure or mystery, and by playing indoor games such as chess. But games such as cards are to be rigidly avoided if we find that they tempt us beyond the limits of due recreation to waste time that ought to be spent in study, work or healthy out-door recreation, or in other duties. This warning is necessary when many people are led to waste precious hours because games of chance create unhealthy excitement

even when they do not lead to gambling, which is not usually the case with games of skill such as chess. Allied to these are the many hobbies which give light and healthy scope for the exercise of art and skill.

It is important that play should be play, and should not be spoiled by being taken too seriously or being tainted with ambition. An instance of this is the growing feeling that music in the home is generally so much inferior to the professional music of the public concert that it loses its attraction. But really the music and singing of those we love at home is far more restful and pleasant than that which our critical faculty so much approves in the concert hall, though it may be very far from perfect. The game of cricket is another example. As long as boys play with a ball and bat on any bit of ground that is available there will be pleasure, but the joy often goes when they become ambitious and spend their energy in worrying for a perfect field (which few can have) of the dimensions and kind prescribed by the professionals who make a work of the game.

## CHAPTER IX

## THE ORCHARD

THERE is one thing more which is absolutely necessary before your house can be regarded as complete, and that is the orchard. It symbolises that part of your life which is productive to the outer world. Nothing lives by itself and you must give as well as take, producing fruit of hand or brain for yourself and others. The basis of your life in the outer world will therefore be a definite occupation, which must be beneficial, not useless nor in any degree harmful. It may be directly productive, or distributive, or protective. If it belongs to the first class it must be beneficial in the production of something useful, beautiful, amusing, instructive, or inspiring, and your occupation will then be that of farmer, manual labourer or supervisor, manufacturer, transport worker, artizan, domestic worker or manager, artist, humourist, actor, author, lecturer, or something of the kind. If it is in the second class you will be a shop-keeper, commercial traveller, transport organiser, merchant or trader; or in the third, policeman, lawyer, magistrate, head-man or legislator.

Since civilisation is a state of human society organised for the humane production and just distribution of true wealth, including spiritual, moral, mental, emotional and physical riches, benefit can only be secured by what subserves the progress of these things. Benefit is assured in the first place by the production of such articles as are likely to be of lasting value to the public, those that appeal to a good motive for

possession and cultivate a taste for high quality, so as to raise the standard of living for the people for whom they are intended. In the second case the goods so produced are to be brought within the reach of those who need them, and distribution is to be for the benefit of the public. All such practices as that of cornering and profiteering are a crime against civilisation and a means of degradation of character for those who follow them.

We may take one or two examples. If you are a shop-keeper it is your business to see that you are a real convenience to the people in your neighbourhood, that you provide the kind of things that will be most serviceable to them, so that you can feel that whenever a customer leaves your shop he will not regret having bought the article that you sold him. You must therefore make yourself a judge of the honest merits of the things you sell, mark your prices with a fair proportion of profit, and avoid those goods which you know to be produced by sweated labour, that is by workers who in extreme necessity are forced to work too hard, under bad conditions and for less than a reasonable living wage. If you sell provisions or food, they must not be adulterated. In that way you will be doing good to your neighbourhood; you will get a reputation for honesty, and people will be glad to trade with you and thankful that you have helped them to understand that it is better and cheaper to buy occasionally good things that are handsome and durable than to buy more frequently cheap and showy rubbish. If you are a pleader you will desire only that the judge before whom you present your case shall know to the full the facts of the case and the truth as you know it, and in this way you will get a reputation for honesty, as a man who never cooks a case for a client, so that only those who feel that they are thoroughly in the right will dare to come to you. In this way you will help the magistrate or judge, the honest litigant and the sacred cause of justice. If you become a teacher or a scientist you will be a devotee of the spotless truth,

for it is no business of yours to become an advocate for any particular policy, to suppress the facts that do not suit that policy and lay undue emphasis upon those that do, but only to discover and disseminate the truth.

Whenever you practise or prepare for your definite occupation, you must have in view a definite ideal to which you aspire and a definite virtue with which you work. These three, occupation, ideal and virtue, must always be kept together. For example, as a magistrate or lawyer, your ideal may be justice and your virtue truth; as a merchant your ideal may be prosperity and your virtue honesty; as a producer your ideal may be perfect quality or perfect workmanship and your virtue diligence or perseverance; as a domestic worker your ideal may be peace and your virtue considerateness. In each case one must select the ideal and the virtue for himself for a fixed period, a month or a year, and then change it if one so desires, and in this way you would be living the life of a spiritual man in the midst of the world's activity, which may be harder and more full of falls, but is far more profitable, than the spiritual life lived in seclusion away from the temptations of daily life.

Some people will meet you on the verandah, others in the gardens, others in the orchard, and your social relationships will differ in the three cases. It is well to realise that only people of similar social training can meet in the gardens and play together, just as those of similar business training can get on well together in the orchards. People who can work together harmoniously cannot always play together, and it is well not to be agitated by the troubles of social inequality, but to realise that in a perfect system each has his own orbit. Jupiter may be further than Venus from the Sun; but this detracts nothing from his size and power.

## CHAPTER X

### THE THREE FUNDAMENTAL VIRTUES

IF you have practised to any extent the course so far described, you will have discovered that the three qualities of courage, truth and love have not been selected at random, but are fundamental in character, and that under those three every other quality that you can mention comes in as subordinate. A close inspection of the character will show that these are the three fundamental virtues, or means of progress towards human perfection, ending so far as we are able to see in three things which are so much part of the soul itself that no human being is born without an instinctive desire for them, namely, freedom, realisation of the truth about things, a full sense of the unity of life.

Unity of life is the goal as it appears to those who are affectionate and devotional; realisation of the fullness of life to those who are attached to knowledge and truth, and freedom to those of courage and will. Yet when any one of these is considered in any degree of perfection, it will be seen that it includes the other two. Though in a given human character one of the three qualities may be stronger than the other two, none can ever be absent. They are a trinity in unity, inseparable.

It is inevitable, though not altogether desirable, that one of these should predominate in your character, and even that you should concentrate upon it more than upon the others. The undesirable element comes

in directly when you have to deal with other persons—on the verandah, in the garden and the orchards. This can be thought out in detail. One or two hints will suffice here. Kindness and love that limit the freedom of the loved one do much to destroy gratitude and even embitter the gift. On the other hand, rash plunges at freedom through acts of courage dictated by the will, lacking in judgment and affection, produce much trouble in the world. And indirectly all such forms of trouble arising from our unbalanced characters re-act upon the circumstances of our own life, as will be seen more clearly in a later chapter. Still, the unbalance cannot be avoided, and need not be grieved over. No one can pay strong and clear attention to more than one thing at a time, though a clear vision of the fundamental relation between the three will produce the effect of bringing up the other two at least in the penumbra of your vision while your attention is focused on one.

It is interesting to find confirmation of this view in the *Bhagavad-Gita* where, when Sri Krishna had been telling Arjuna that the greatest gift that a man can make is the one that is accompanied by knowledge. He tells him that he can realise this truth not by study alone, but by three things—reverence, enquiry and service. That is to say, nothing can be truly known by thinking about it. It can be truly known only by the soul that gives the best of thought, the best of emotion and the best of action in the search. It is the three things taken together that constitute human life, and in each person they exist in different degrees and proportions. Summing up the above facts, you will find that religious persons seek unity through love, realisation through truth, and freedom through courage, and these three perfections of the soul correspond with the Omnipresence, the Omniscience and the Omnipotence of the Divine Being.

As the three ends of the virtues of courage, truth and love are perfect qualities of the soul, in setting our faces towards them and walking with a will, we

are really striving to be our full and true selves. It is due to lack of self-realisation that we are caught in all the meshes of confusion in the outer world. We forget ourselves. No one is bad, no one lacks the three qualities, but people forget themselves and cease to be themselves ever and again. We live intermittently, instead of constantly, as will be more clearly shown in the chapter on the three fundamental vices.

*Exercise 12. Twelfth week.* Study the character which moves your actions during the day. Observe the elements of courage, truth and love; and try to discover how far you are moved by fondness for creative work, eagerness for useful knowledge and love for your fellow-beings.

the service of God and the method of service will be the ultimate in our daily meditations. To do this you must be the inheritor of manhood to sustain life in the individual and on the basis of a spiritual magnet pass his energies along along the spiritual path.

## CHAPTER XI

### TESTING THE CHARACTER

AT this stage of enquiry and practice you need another piece of knowledge to guide your progress. Without it you may try to follow another man's path instead of your own--like a mango tree aspiring to be a cocoanut tree, or like a pine longing to be an oak. You must find out what kind of man you are, and what is the greatest power in you. Is it love or understanding or will, or the inspiration of beauty or religious devotion or scientific knowledge? And whatever it is, you must use it first to inspire and strengthen your weaker qualities, and then to lead them in full battle array into the field of life, with all its thought, feeling and action.

Men differ in the construction of character, and will do so to the end. The consciousness of each one of us is a growing unfolding thing. That of a Shakespeare, a Kalidasa, a Tagore is a globe of glorious light compared with the feeble glow of the average man. It is brilliant and large and ever becoming more vivid and expansive. So grows the consciousness until the human brain can no more contain it than the brain of a cow can carry the consciousness of a man--then human experience will be at an end, and the divine (self-shining) life will begin. And up to that very point your leading quality and power will remain the guide and prompter of all the rest. That quality you must find, and you must use it. Never let it work alone--it needs the support of all the rest, though they take their very strength from its prompting. Through it, but with their aid, all your triumphs will

be achieved in the inner world of your own thoughts and feelings, and in the outer world of action and reaction. It is for you the magic wand with which you can and will sooner or later command your world.

How is it to be found?

Test yourself and your life by careful introspection. You have done something—*why*? You have stood for parliament, written a book, promoted a trading company, started a shop, painted a picture, taken to athletics, bought a motor-car—anything you like—*why*? No common answer will do: “Oh, I felt the need of a change. I wanted something to do. I needed money for my family. I wanted to enlighten the public. I wanted health.” But *why*? And again *why*, to your trivial and superficial answer. What *do you want*?

Perhaps your fundamental need is to do things. You seek knowledge not because you want knowledge, except as it helps you to do what you want. You make friends—ultimately for the same reason. It is not knowledge and love you want first of all; it is the use of your will in action, and you bring these to its aid like a General studying the country not because he is interested in it, but for the purposes of battle.

Perhaps your fundamental power is love and you are full of sympathy for your fellow men. You may seek knowledge and perform actions—these subserve your sense of unity with other people and your insatiable desire for their happiness.

Perhaps you desire above all to understand life and things, and to this end you have to live a life of activity and mingle closely with your fellow men. Sympathy and the will to act you will surely develop, but through your fundamental hunger for knowledge of things as they really are.

Perhaps you are moved most of all by the reverence for law that we call science, by the reverence for love that we call religious devotion, or by reverence for beauty in all things and their relationships.

Question yourself once, twice, a hundred times, day after day, until you find what it is that most prompts your actions, trivial as well as great, and then apply it to the development of your weaker qualities, so that the whole character may become well-balanced and free from the positive vice which always appears when one quality is strong and the others are weak.

For example, if you act from love, study wisdom and develop determination for the sake of love, that it may not be foolish, injurious, or ineffective; if from desire for understanding, mingle lovingly with men that your judgment may not be warped by lack of sympathy and close contact or by a limited point of view. If it is for love of work, work for the development of understanding and love, so that your work may not be purposeless or harmful. And in outer effects seek to preserve reverence for law, love and beauty.

With this idea in view, study carefully the next seven chapters, which are intended to help you to find out which is your leading power. Quite probably you will find that two out of the seven mentioned are strongly marked, and that sometimes one and sometimes the other takes command of the character.

One of the greatest benefits of discovery of your own type will be that you can henceforth act with a direct motive, and drifting will be at an end. "When the eye is single the mind will be full of light." If you want, for example, accurate knowledge, you will distinctly work with that desire, and cultivate your other faculties, (the will, devotion, sense of beauty and the rest) so that they will do their best in their own way of helping (through energy, intimacy of contact, responsiveness and other powers) to carry out the main purpose for which you directly live. Indirect motives producing action not true to your type have to be constantly pumped up, but the direct motive provides a gushing well of soul energy.

*Exercise 13. Thirteenth week.* Question yourself as above indicated.

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## CHAPTER XII

### THE MAN OF WILL

WE have now to consider more fully the leading qualities with which men are endowed. Each of these is related to an ideal or ultimate aim and has its own characteristic virtue.

We may take first the man of will, whose ideal is freedom. Justice is his virtue because he seeks to make others strong and free, and courage is his instrument of progress, because he is a man of decision, and must often act without waiting clearly to see the reason why.

There has been much discussion about the nature of the will, and many attempts have been made to define its characteristics. It is sufficient for us to know that it is present in our own consciousness and to feel its working. It is as impossible to define will as it is to define consciousness, or anything else subjective. Subjective states cannot be defined in terms of objective things or their qualities or relationships. If will could be so defined it would be objective. By experience we know that we will, as we know that we think and feel. Nor need we raise the question "What makes you will?" It is sufficient to know that will is a power within us, and that we can learn to apply it self-consciously just as to think self-consciously—or, rather, we can become self-conscious in the will.

It would be a mistake to think that you only use the will on great occasions when you make a special decision. Its action is present in the slightest voluntary

movement of your little finger. It no more ceases than thought and feeling do, but is co-extensive with life and consciousness.

We have now to see how it appears in the life of one in whose character it is predominant. The training along this line is twofold—as applied in your relation to yourself and others. First, it means self-control in the three regions of your personal being—your physical body, your emotions and your thoughts about things. Such self-control leads to a reflection of the ideal of freedom in the personality. As regards the physical body, it requires that you train it into a condition of perfect constitutional fitness (not necessarily of great muscular strength, because that is a matter rather of quantity than of quality) and strive to make its environment fit in with the same purpose. As regards the emotions, it means the control of all those that agitate you, such as fear and anger and the kind of pride that can be wounded. As regards the thinking mind, it means the abolition of prejudices which distort it and prevent its healthy action.

Without such self-control in all three parts of the personality there can be no real personal freedom, for you will be constantly dragged this way and that by every trifling circumstance that has power to injure, agitate and mislead you.

The second part of the training, which concerns your relation to others, requires that you win for them the same treasure of freedom that you seek for yourself, and help them therefore in their circumstances and in their self-control. This means that you do not seek to prop them up in matters in which they are capable of helping themselves and so developing their own powers. You must be a reflection of the god who helps them that help themselves, for any help that is purely external and does not call out in any degree the soul powers of the one who is helped is injurious.

Further than that, you must help others by putting power and opportunity into their hands. To cling to

power and deprive others of it, under the guise of a desire to gain much power in order to help others, is one of the greatest dangers of this path. The pursuit of fame also makes for the bondage of others, for it is not desirable that one should fill other people's minds with oneself and thus reproduce that viciously selfish characteristic of the modern story-novel which causes us to feel the greatest sympathy for the hero in his misfortunes, but pass over carelessly the even greater misfortunes of subordinate characters.

The pursuit of freedom, for self and others, thus becomes very much a path of action, faith and sacrifice. Because the intelligence is subordinate to the will, there will be many leaps in the dark, many efforts and actions of which the result cannot be seen; and these call for the greatest courage, and faith in principles whose working out cannot be clearly seen.

He who follows this course has not the satisfaction of seeing the way clearly before him that comes to the man who is first a thinker and secondly an actor, and he has not even those fitful flashes of satisfaction which come to the man of devotional feeling and alternately raise him to ecstasy and lower him to depths of gloom. But later, he has the satisfaction of feeling in himself that working of the will which brings its own ecstasy as much as deep philosophic thought or profound devotion can do. In each case the ecstasy is a conscious living in the soul.

The outward form of personal training is not unlike that described by the ancient Stoics, who put their happiness in the will, not in any outward thing. It was their first aim to decide which things were in their power and which were not and, when they had so decided, to concern themselves (in thought, emotion and action) only with the former. Then the only thing the Stoic had to fear was himself, lest he failed to use his powers rightly upon those things which came within their scope. He thus argued that just as we take care of our houses, land and other possessions and do

not leave them to the decay which awaits all things not constantly protected and renewed by careful thought, and just as we train our horses to keep them fit, so should we treat this personality, the physical body, the emotions and thinking mind, and train all these as healthy, useful and happy servants of the will. There is nothing more in our power than our own personality—it is the one region from which God has withdrawn Himself in order that we may be kings—and here indeed we should fear lest we do not exercise our power, and exercise it rightly. An illustration of this is the story of the Stoic thrown into prison who refused to be agitated, and said to his captor, "You have taken possession of this body. It is now in your power, and you are responsible for what happens to it. It is not in my power and is therefore no concern of mine."

It is sometimes thought that self-assertion, arrogance and a bullying disposition indicate the possession of will-power. Nothing could be further from the truth. Power is ease, and the will is the quietest thing in the world. The scientific definition of power includes the conception of time. A man and a boy may both be able to lift a thousand bricks on to a wall, but if the man can do it in an hour and the boy requires two hours to complete the task, we say that the man has greater power, and the greater his power the greater will be the ease with which he does the work. So it is not the fussy, or noisy, or blustering person who is the man of will, but the one who calmly pursues his object without yielding even when the means to success are not clearly in view. It is pre-eminently self-determination—an innate predisposition not to be diverted by external things. The boaster on the other hand, seeking the good opinion of the world, is very much the servant of circumstances.

The special virtue of the man of will is Justice, which seeks to give to each the best opportunity for the development of his own powers and hence for progress towards the ideal of freedom.

There are two great dangers in this type and it is well to be on guard against them. They are selfishness and thoughtlessness, which lead to a numerous band of lesser evils, not the least of which are cruelty and a disposition to dominate over others.

There is a tendency for men on this line to push their purposes to success, sometimes at the sacrifice of truth and kindness, when those qualities are weak and circumstances press for action. This defect has to be overcome by a deliberate use of action in the practice of acts of kindness, and the maintenance of truth under difficulties.

From this point onward the student will have to frame his own exercises, as they depend on the discoveries he will now make about his own character.

and the world of life in complete order and one great  
conflictless and progressive movement, and of how  
this movement of life is based on love, sympathy  
and the power of sympathy.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MAN OF LOVE—THE PHILANTHROPIST

IN the latest phases of modern life men are realising more and more the necessity for co-operation with one another and the benefits that arise therefrom, and it is seen more clearly than ever before that co-operation does not mean the working together of those who think and feel alike, but rather of those who differ in ideals and character and in talents and ability, so that a perfect cosmos may be built of various materials and forms. The whole work of what is called the Law of Evolution is really to convert chaos into cosmos by relating all things together more and more. Even defined as a progressive differentiation and integration, it is seen as the Law of Love bringing all things together into a close organic relationship. To see this law and instinctively obey it is characteristic of this second type of men, who are wise in seeing and feeling the unity of all.

The unity of mankind does not depend upon a similarity of instincts, which would produce the unity of action that is seen in a flock of sheep, but upon a deeply rooted spiritual instinct which will not allow the man who possesses it to ignore the conscious life of others, however different from his own their ideals and methods of progress may be. Behind all the diversity there is a unity of consciousness in the subjective world, just as behind all material objects there is a unity of fundamental substance. This unity appears in man as the spiritual instinct of sympathy, the power to feel with others, which is present wherever there is love of any degree or kind.

The second path of progress towards perfection and happiness is that which has unity as its ideal or end, sympathy with all living things as its virtue, and deep-seated love as its instrument of progress. If you belong to the type of people for whom this is the path you will be a philanthropist of some kind, one of the followers of the religion of love of which the Christ in the West and Sri Krishna in the East are the great leaders.

In dealing with others you will not be able to separate your happiness from theirs, and this will lead you to become a teacher of the ignorant, a helper of the weak, a producer of something that will make for the greater happiness of mankind. If you pursue knowledge it will be for the sake of love. If you work hard it will also be inspired by love. It will not be knowledge that leads you to love, but love that leads you to knowledge and activity. You can test your fundamental character by the question whether love leads to the other two, and if it does you will know that you belong predominantly to this line.

It is not necessary to say much about the virtue of love, for it has been preached with marvellous perfection in the *Bhagavad-Gita* of the Hindus and in the *New Testament* of the Christians, as well as in other places. We need but note that perfect love can never be wounded, because it forgets self utterly in thinking of the outlook of others upon life.

It is, however, a path full of dangers, when the love is not accompanied by strength of will and well-balanced understanding. In its rudimentary and very imperfect form it often leads to acts of kindness done simply to remove one's own distress, which is produced by sympathy at the sight of suffering in others, as for example in the case of a person who gives money to a professional beggar in order to remove his horrid presence. This appears also in many social defects which sensitive and refined people try to hide away and forget—for example, the odious killing that

precedes the eating of flesh upon a western table, and the dreadful poverty that accompanies our modern economic warfare. The strength of will and understanding of life required to deal with the root problems of anti-love in society are often lacking, even where love is strong. Love must come forward with all its body-guard of understanding and determined work before it can really fulfil its mission in the world.

It is characteristic of this type of man that in the conflict of duties he will often decide upon kindness in preference to truth, and will weakly refrain from responsibilities which involve decision and action where duty may lead to acts which may not seem or feel kind on the surface. He may save himself from this dangerous error by realising that love involves a mingling in all life, and that truth is a great power for human unity in the long run.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MAN OF UNDERSTANDING--THE PHILOSOPHER

THE man who is developing along the line of will finds as he proceeds that that quality brings him nearer to freedom first of all by controlling the thoughts, emotions and actions of his personality. Similarly, on the line that we have now to consider, the same three parts of the personality are brought under the direction of knowledge that is so swift and sure that the only names that we can give to it are intuition and insight.

Eastern philosophy has always maintained that the thinking mind which is part of our personality is an exceedingly imperfect and undeveloped thing, and that its range is extremely limited. It is only an instrument usable for a particular purpose, just as one would take a boat to sail on the sea or a cart with wheels to travel over the land. And just as one would not try to travel over all seas in one's little boat or over all lands in one's cart, so one need not try to gain all knowledge by means of the physical senses and the ratiocinating mind. The actions that we can perform with our bodies are few, but the will can apply them in an infinite variety of ways. So also the knowledge that we can gain is relatively little, but intuition can make it infinitely significant. Pieces of knowledge are innumerable and you can go on adding one to another indefinitely, but when the intuition works, with its direct vision of the truth, it irradiates the mind and illuminates the whole field of knowledge. The yoga philosophy states that

there are three principal modes of gaining knowledge —by direct vision, by reasoning and by the testimony of credible witnesses. It regards the last two of these as mere make-shifts. Mental life cannot for ever remain so imperfect and indirect, but, as the higher mind grows, a faculty of direct mental perception will replace the present clumsy and halting methods which are shaping what is almost a rudimentary organ. All this bears out the general principle that in the spiritual life it is quality not quantity that is important.

In writing on education I have pointed out that the mind should be sharpened as a tool, not filled as a museum, and this is a true method when we are dealing with the personal mind of a growing child ; but when we are striving to realise that higher mind whose faculty is intuition, one would rather say that the mind should be treated as a lamp to be kept clean and bright so that light may be steady and pure within it and may shine outward upon all the things of life. As we go through all the dark places of life, they are lighted up from within ourselves, and it is infinitely more important that we should attend to the perfection of that light than that we should store huge quantities of memories of facts and experience, most of which we shall never need.

On this line the ideal is realisation, the virtue is truth and the instrument of progress is understanding. It leads men to become philosophers and see the principles underlying all forms. It gives great power for abstract reasoning, and in the life of the world, joined with an active disposition, it gives great adaptability, for its owner can see the same essential in many forms, and will find a value in everything that has been evolved by the Divine Mind in Nature. The danger of this third line appears when the will-power and the love-nature are not strong enough to prompt to action, and the man tends to become a spectator of life, keenly interested in understanding it, but not eager to mingle with it. He must use his understanding to develop the qualities which he lacks.

The chief practice on this line will be that in which one learns to calm the lower mind while keeping up the activity of the intelligence, so as to receive intuitions in the perfectly controlled personality, and for this the later chapters of *Concentration*, particularly that on "Contemplation," provide a course.

which is said that no entity should be left unprovided with the natural covering of consciousness, and that of an equilibrium and the division of that life (and the action of the soul) in no part (resisting action) the greatest part of which is always the soul.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE MAN OF IMAGINATION—THE MAGICIAN

THERE is one great mystery of life that no intellect can understand—the way in which thought and matter are connected or rather related. What is the nature of that peculiar harmony by which consciousness and matter are related in a marvellously harmonious series of correspondences, so that for every thought of mine there is a corresponding and obedient action and form, and every action and form in the outer world has power to awaken ideas in my mind? Nobody can say; but there are minds, specially tuned to this divine magic which fills the world, that take their delight in a constant vision and use of the relation between spiritual and material things.

Looking at the scenes of earth, full of changing colour, sound and form, they see not matter, but the play of a divine mind, comparable with the human mind, but infinitely richer in powers and in spiritual possessions. As a man may see the mountain tops mirrored in a still lake, so they see in the qualities of this world the play of soul powers of will, love and thought. What to others looks like matter is to them the expression of soul. Conversely, they clothe every thought in colour or sound, and relate by their vivid and spontaneous imagination every spiritual or abstract idea to a never-ending series of corresponding forms. They always see the one in the many and the many in the one, and there opens for them a special line of creative activity in which the imagination plays the greatest part.

Their language is full of imagery, for they constantly see the likenesses of the most different things. Their reasoning is full of analogy. Their art is full of suggestion. Their actions tend to be dramatic. They realise outward life by imitation. In all that they do they are not thinking of precise effects in the material world, but of the representation in life of the wonderful things that they contact in what to others is but the dreamland of the soul. In their creative work they use imagination above all other faculties.

There is in them a harmony between soul and personality such that the former can never leave the latter alone, so that the personality is often torn in conflict between its response to soul impulses and its smooth obedience to the environment in which its lot is cast.

I have related the words "magic" and "imagination" to this type for a special reason. Magic was never concerned so much with scientific investigation or intuitional observation as with the sudden perception of relationships and correspondences and the storing of these in memory. And memory itself—strong in this type—is the greatest of magic, transcending all limitations of space and time.

If you belong to this type you can range over the whole field of human experience. By imagination you can put yourself in the position of others, and find a means also for expressing what is perceived and felt in the soul.

which you will not, you will be held in continual strife, and you will be held in continual pain and be continually exposed to the law of the world, according to that which you have chosen to hold in your heart. You will be continually exposed to the law of the world, according to that which you have chosen to hold in your heart. You will be continually exposed to the law of the world, according to that which you have chosen to hold in your heart.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MAN OF INVESTIGATION—

### THE SCIENTIST

IF you belong to a type of men of which your will, or love, or understanding is the leader of your forces of character, you are one of those who unconsciously seek perfection and happiness by retreating within yourself. The use of these faculties is in itself a delight and an inspiration, and the forms in which they express themselves are secondary, just as the apparatus of physical culture—the bars, the bells, the clubs—are to the athlete only a casual means to his end of self-development.

But you may belong to another great class who seek happiness and perfection by advancing without. They drink in all the divine nourishment by devotion to God in the external world—in the utter obedience to His law that marks the scientific mind; in the prostration before His love that characterises the religious devotee; and in the pursuit of His beauty that is the essence of all true art. All these are forms of faith in God in the external world and of that reverence and worship by means of which it is designed that a man shall absorb into himself the divine qualities. Most people are not aware of what is going on beneath the surface current of their lives. You must find out where your obedience lies, and then encourage and develop it until it becomes uttermost worship.

All progress means an ever-increasing self-conscious association with God, the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent. We have seen that will can only become

highly developed when it is at one with the universal moral law of justice. So knowledge can only increase through a spirit of truth that renders perfect and unhesitating obedience to the laws of the world which it studies. A thinking mind which had not behind it that hidden religion which appears as an inexplicable faith in the intelligibility or understandability of the whole world, but presumed to imagine that there was something wrong with the laws of nature and the laws of thought would bring its own progress to a standstill. Consciously or unconsciously men of will and of knowledge bow themselves in perfect faith and obedience to something greater than themselves—that is to say, greater morally and mentally.

If you belong to the fifth type of development your leading activity will be that of the investigating mind eager for knowledge, confident that whatever knowledge is found will prove useful to man, and instinctively obedient to the laws governing all forms—the arrangement of the world made by the Divine Mind. You will have confidence in the outer world, and belief that it will lead you to the truth, and one of your strongest virtues will be accuracy of observation and record, and carefulness in classification.

I know a great man of this type who was so meticulously accurate that he would insist that all letters should be folded to fit their envelopes precisely, and that the stamp should be put on the envelope perfectly straight and about the same distance from the top and side edges. This showed an alliance of the fifth type and the seventh (that of beauty) which we shall presently study. It might seem that this accuracy was a waste of time, but in fact it represents a form of obedience to truth that must develop great soul power.

Investigation allied with the will to create produces the experimenter and inventor in all fields of progress, and people of this type are doing much in our day to increase the scope of human experience by giving

added power to our senses and activities. Like all strong virtues, it may prove to be the core of a vice. The mind seeks means for the removal of human ills, and, relying upon the guidance of investigation (observation and experiment) alone, it disregards the needs of our best feelings and our sense of beauty. Hence in combating disease it runs to vivisection and other horrors, instead of health and beauty culture by means of physical exercise and the provision of eugenic conveniences. The ancient Greeks, full of love of beauty and philosophical understanding, show us by contrast the error of our modern ways. When the two methods are combined we may expect a great perfection of human personal life.

## CHAPTER XVII

## THE MAN OF REVERENCE—THE DEVOTEE

EVERY religion has spoken of the uplifting power of divine grace, and incidentally explained that it works in the soul, cleansing, uplifting, strengthening, only in response to that voluntary devotion which is emotional worship. This devotion is a response to the love of God for His world, as the eager investigation of the scientific mind is a self-developing response to His law. And just as surely as investigation with a pure desire for truth develops the mind of the searcher so that it comes ever nearer in nature and condition to the truth which conditions all things (and this is its greatest good), so does the constant hymn of praise and prayer of the devoted worshipper nourish his own mind with the emotional beauty of its ideal God.

If you are a devotee, and love of God is the leader of the forces of your soul, your devotion is an open channel between your soul and God in the world. Your devotion is therefore a distinct faculty of the soul, like thinking, or willing or loving, and, as it may be said that man has a distinct and unquestionable power to think, so it should be known that he has a distinct power to worship. Just as the physical eye opens to take in sights of the world of sense, so does devotion open the soul of man to take in the things of the spiritual world.

We may say that a plant grows up through the soil and into the air through the material springs infolded in its germ and seed, but equally true it is that the latent powers in the seed are drawn upwards

by the enticement and nourishment of the sun. There is far more evolution by attraction from above than by propulsion from beneath. It is not sufficiently recognised in modern science and philosophy that the evolution of creatures very largely depends upon their association with superiors. Domestic animals are uplifted by association with man to a higher state of intelligence, a sense of right and wrong and a degree of faithful affection, which are sometimes as good as human, though narrow in their scope. Even in the lower ranges of animal and vegetable society where one species is often at war with another, it is frequently the case that the battle with a superior develops capacity and strength. The rabbits of Australia, for example, at war with man, soon developed claws with which they could climb over wire-netting fences which men had erected to keep them away from the growing vegetables; and some biologists would insist that the development of the human brain to its present pitch of efficiency is due to man's weaker physical nature and absence of natural weapons, which have forced him to depend upon cunning rather than strength or swiftness. It is a general rule throughout life that progress comes mainly through help from above and mankind acknowledges this by its reverence to the God idea, conceived in different degrees of crudity as it has been among all peoples.

The man who follows the path of devotion—as for example the Hindu who repeats the thousand and one names of the Divine Being with meditation on their meaning, and who dedicates himself to the service of that Being—is definitely drawing himself nearer in qualities to his ideal. The use of hymns of praise and prayer is not that God may enjoy our adulation, but that we may have our attention fixed upon our best conception of the Divine Being, in an entirely receptive mood.

The two chief dangers of this type of growth are inactivity and thoughtlessness. In contemplation of what is so far above one, one sometimes forgets the

world of duty among one's fellow men, and fails to apply, and to understand how to apply, those growing virtues which one has absorbed from the world of God, in that smaller world of personal thought and action and love where one's self is god—the willer, the thinker the actor. And the result of this thoughtlessness and inactivity, when it is carried too far, is the strangulation even of the devotional life; for life is not feeling alone, and just as activity and feeling are necessary to understanding, so is studious practice of virtues in life necessary to their pure absorption through the avenues of emotion. It is, of course, inevitable that in early days of practice the character should be ill-balanced, and therefore the thought crude and the activity awkward; and devotion lacking in intelligence may for long march along narrow and injurious paths of superstition, sentimentality and intolerance. But these are errors which will correct themselves with growth, and will leave in the end a perfect character, attuned to the Divine grace of all life.

of a list has your wallet along, because you'd like to know  
whether you've got enough to buy buttercup or this, which  
is to blow off your hand and the hand of your  
nerves has already learned to blow, tell me just in  
readiness and quickly off—here's a one-rupee bill for this  
bus accident, and if you want any more, you can get  
it—elegantly and all that, and if you want a little  
more, just let a bill go to these four  
of yesterdays, and you'll be writing to me this month  
and tomorrow night, and the next night, and the next  
GOD in His world is recognisable and approachable  
not only by investigation into the True and yearning  
for the Good. He is equally attainable through every  
sense in the material world as the Beauty in all beauti-  
ful things. There can be no question that all virtue  
can enter into us through our contemplation of God as  
Beauty. If it is your leading quality, the pursuit will  
awaken all the powers of the soul, unite them on  
account of its omnipresence in you, and lead the whole  
character on to superhuman perfection. You may  
recognise it by the ease with which you respond to the  
beautiful.

To stand and gaze up with reverence at the mighty  
Himalayan mountains with their snowy peaks, is to  
drink into oneself something of the strength and purity  
of the God which they represent in the world of sense.  
To contemplate with reverent gratitude the glowing  
splendour of the sunrise is to assimilate something of  
the peace and splendour of God that we have witnessed,  
so that we have become richer than before—the seed  
of life has taken true nourishment from the act and  
has grown nearer to the perfect sun of life. Indeed,  
the whole world is the book of God written for our  
reading, so that we may know Him with a living  
knowledge; and our ability to read is a thing which is  
cultivated by the deliberate opening up of our nature  
in grateful appreciation of beauty. The God Idea in  
us would be crude and feeble without these grand  
representations of the material world. Therefore the

man who reverences the divine neither in personified form nor in the abstract, but manifest as beauty in the universe, who strives everywhere to see and feel that beauty, is also by his devotion developing the divine attributes in himself, or in other words is realising God within himself more and more. This seventh type of human progress by response to beauty does not lend itself much to description and explanation, but each one who has had real experience of it in any degree will know what is meant.

People in whom devotion to God or beauty predominates in the character generally follow that outward philosophy of life which leads one to live in the present without undue regard to past or future. They do not attempt to penetrate into the mysteries of the fate that God has provided for their future nor trouble much about the past. They are the true Epicureans, who feel that the feast of life has been well laid out before them on the table of Nature and it is theirs to enjoy it in fullest happiness, so that, through absence of any anxiety and through perfect trust in the healing and creative powers of Nature, they may themselves grow in love and beauty, like the lilies of the field that sow not, neither spin.

Beauty and love, flowing into them from their constant ideal, gradually come to control and guide the entire personality, with all its thoughts, emotions and actions, as they form the prevailing mood. They learn to see greatness in everything, not only in those that are strikingly beautiful or are labelled so in conventional thought, but throughout the entire world. They learn to read not only the large print of the book of life, but also the smaller print that escapes the attention of the majority of men.

The last three types of men mentioned, in whom the Scientific, the Devotional and the Artistic Spirit predominate, have one strong quality in common—that of obedience to God expressed in something external. One result of this in this seventh type is that when Devotion

is also strong, the religion of the devotee will express itself in forms of religious beauty—particularly in artistic ceremonial. There is a clear distinction between the art that expresses beauty, and that which suggests to the beholder the beauty that he conceives in his own mind, while quite unbeautiful in itself. This is to be seen in India, where the most ignorant of the people are yet so well developed in the magical sense of the fourth type that the sight even of an ungainly image or picture of Sri Krishna will call up deep devotion full of a vision of God's beauty. Very often to the European Christian observer the image or picture seems only grotesque, because he belongs more to the seventh type, and loves the beauty of God expressed, not suggested, in forms of the outer world. For the same reason the art of the fourth type is often full of symbol and imagery.

The obedient quality of the seventh type was strongly shown in the Greek love of beauty, which was allied with the third type, philosophy, so that the Greeks not only loved art but also had a reason for their love. They clearly saw its quality of obedience when they argued that the great artist was one who saw more clearly than others the beauty of the forms created by the Divine Mind, and was able to isolate various elements of that beauty and express them in sculptured or architectural or other form to the less developed vision of ordinary men. Obedience to the divine beauty in the world was one of the greatest virtues of the Artist.

Beauty has also a peculiar quality of stability which it imparts to its devotee in the form of peace, which is living beauty in the soul. As it is stability in pose, so it is the repose of perfect action, and also peace within the soul.

## CHAPTER XIX

## THE SCIENCE OF THE EMOTIONS

IT is desirable to study a little more fully the play of your emotions, which relate you in feeling (based upon judgment of the object of emotion to some extent) to the world round you. The two grand emotions are liking and disliking—in stronger words, love and hate—and these are again divisible into sets of three, according to the circumstances of the case. Consider the emotional attitude of man to God, of man to man and of God to man, with regard to the feeling of attraction that accompanies liking or love. In the first case it is reverence, devotion, worship ; in the second, friendship, brotherliness ; in the third, benevolence.

These three circumstances appear in different degrees in all our human relationships. With reference to every man I meet I have at least a faint judgment that he is my superior, equal or inferior, in reference to the subject that matters at the moment. According to this judgment or fancy (or supposition as the case may be) my emotion changes. My liking becomes some degree of admiration, respect or reverence towards the superior, of friendliness towards the equal, or of kindness towards the inferior. If I had dislike, its three forms would be fear, anger and active pride.

The first set seeks to unite, the second to separate, the subject and object of emotion, either in material fact or by reducing or increasing the gulf of inequality. True benevolence seeks to raise the object of its compassion to a condition of equality—that is no true kindness which leaves the recipient with an

added sense of his own dependence and inferiority in some respect. (Here is to be discovered the cause of the germ of hatred that tends to infect the soul against the demonstrant giver, who has helped us much, but robbed us of independence, self-respect and true liberty. It is marvellous how many men secretly hate benefactors.) Similarly, true reverence seeks to lift its possessor towards the object of worship, and love equalises the parties to it more and more by affectionate give and take. The following table shows the relationships of the principal emotions:

	LOVE (ATTRACTION)	HATE (REPULSION)
To inferiors	Kindness Benevolence Compassion Self-Sacrifice	Superciliousness Insolence Arrogance Cruel pride
To equals	Friendliness Affection Brotherliness Love	Dislike Hostility Anger Ferocity
To superiors	Admiration Respect Reverence Worship	Timidity Fear Horror Terror

The emotions of love are spiritual. They accompany expansion of the soul in the wider life of others—giving without stint, and taking without resentment—and are thus progressive emotions. Those of hate are material, tending to expand the life in bodily possessions and position not held for the sake of

others, excluding others—taking without consideration, and giving with deep resentment—and are thus retrograde emotions.

In the work of character-building, it is of the greatest importance to give up the emotions that are retrograde, not by destroying them and making the emotional life weak and colourless, but by taking any quality that you have on the side of hatred and converting it into its equivalent quality on the side of love. This is done by a triple process, first by imagining scenes in which the hateful quality is expressed by you, second by turning the little key mentioned in Chapter VI and so transmuting the scene to one in which your love emotion appears, and thirdly by practising in the outer world what you have already gone over in imagination. One or two examples will make this transmutation process somewhat more intelligible. If you find pride of superiority rising in you at the sight of one who is weak or ignorant or unlucky, you know that this can only appear on account of selfishness. You are thinking about your own accomplishments. But transfer your consciousness to the other person and try to look out upon the world from his eyes, forgetting yourself, and your pride will be converted to sympathy or compassion in the twinkling of an eye. The opposite case you will find somewhat more difficult, but the same principle applies exactly. If you find yourself in the presence of a tyrant or bully who has power to injure you, it may be that hatred will rise within you in the form of fear. The turn of the key will show you that there is something that you can obtain from God through that man—there is some little thing at least for you to admire, or he would not be in his present position towards you. It will become apparent in our chapter on the fundamental vices that what we usually call emotional vice results from a too great development of one quality at the expense of others. You will realise that the man is not positively vicious, but that it is his strength, in some point which brings out his defects,

In all this work of filling your life with the progressive emotions you will of course have continual falls and there will be a constant temptation to try to avoid all circumstances which are too difficult. It is quite easy to go and live in a forest and from that seclusion feel goodwill towards all mankind ; but it is another matter if you have to take your part in the struggle of life as merchant or lawyer or some such thing, perhaps with a family dependent upon you. While it is not advisable for any man to take upon his shoulders a burden that is too heavy for him to carry, it is undoubtedly true that the man who shoulders his burden is the one who will develop strength. Though he may fall a hundred times in the beginning, it matters not in the least. What is important is that he can get up again every time. The question of success and failure in this matter must always take into account the ratio between success and difficulty or temptation. Virtue or strength is not a question of absolutes ; it is relative to the load which has to be borne. At the same time it is advisable to recognise the manner in which emotional strength grows by repetition of effort within reasonable limits, as do the muscles of the physical body by repetition of exercises. Every time you harbour an emotion of the selfish or retrograde class you weaken yourself for future struggles, and every time you evolve one of the spiritual or unselfish class you add some permanent strength which will make all future struggles easier.

This study of the science of the sympathetic and antipathetic emotions is as definite and usable as a science of material things, such as chemistry or physics. It is knowledge which when applied brings absolutely certain results. It will be found that all those virtues which are prescribed by the various religions fall into the first of our classes. People often feel some confusion and some hopelessness on account of their great variety, but a little study will show that they all fall very conveniently

into our table. Take for example the sixteenth discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita* where there is a list of the qualities that raise man towards divinity.

The following is a translation of the first three verses :

Courage, cleanliness of life, steadfast attachment to wisdom, generosity, self-control and sacrifice, study of what concerns yourself, honesty, harmlessness, truth, absence of anger, letting go, peacefulness, absence of back-biting, sympathy for living beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of envy and conceit—these are his who is born with the divine qualities.

If you desire to follow up this study of the emotions in fuller detail you will find an unusually lucid and powerful treatment of the subject in Babu Bhagavan Das's *Science of the Emotions* and the latter part of Mrs. Besant's *A Study in Consciousness*.

## CHAPTER XX

## THE THREE FUNDAMENTAL VICES

**Laziness**, the absence of courage, and self-control.

**Thoughtlessness**, the absence of truth.

**Selfishness**, the absence of love.

THERE are in human character no such things as positive vices or excrescences to be removed. The three fundamental vices and all the other vices which spring from them are essentially negative, implying the absence of their corresponding virtues in the character. When a vice appears to be positive, it takes its positivity from a virtue with which it is associated and which gives it all the strength it has for evil. Thus a strong development of activity and courage, minus love and truth, would produce a dangerous person, but a person lacking courage and idle as well would be too feeble to be really vicious. Similarly a person full of love and activity but lacking in thought would be dangerous to those around him, especially on a large scale as a social worker. He may, for example, rouse feelings which would lead to public disturbance if, on account of his lack of interest in the truth and the laws of life, he has not given sufficient thought to the study of human nature. His defects become dangerous vices when allied to his positive virtue.

It is therefore a cardinal principle in the science of character-building (and of education of the young) that there shall be no repression, when every force is a virtue and is valuable. In producing a perfect character the method of the sculptor will never do. Of the three modes of producing a form,

that of the sculptor, the builder and the gardener, the last comes nearest to the method to be adopted, but even there there is too much harshness, too much external determination for a satisfactory treatment of a seed so delicate and yet so potent as the human soul. The correct treatment of what appear to be positive vices is education in the corresponding virtue. If a man is brave but selfish, we do not want to repress his bravery, but to develop his affection for his fellow beings by suitable environment and stimulus. If, therefore, in training yourself, you find what appears to be a positive vice, study it in relation to the three fundamental vices, discover your defect and level up the ground of your character; do not repress or destroy. It is very easy to be good and colourless, yet the old saying is strictly true that "the greater the sinner the greater the saint".

There is some religious consolation in this idea. We are saved from the paradoxical belief that a good God creates evil man. There are no evil men, but only imperfect ones, and every bit of experience tends to the development of at least one of the three fundamental virtues. The distinction between virtues and vices is relative, not absolute, and defects of human character are only imperfections and disproportions. This explains the statement made by Sri Krishna in the tenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, where, in the midst of a long list of the glories of the creator as manifested in all the beautiful things of life, He suddenly says: "I am the gambling of the cheat". Further, the positive vice is of great utility. The selfish man of vigour and courage, because of his vigour which makes his defect a vice, plunges into injurious action, which inevitably reacts upon himself even in the material world and brings him suffering of some kind, which gradually awakens in him a sympathetic feeling for the sufferings of others, and so develops love which he would not have acquired without that experience.

It is not usual in books on ethics and morality for moralists to descend to these root-causes of vice. They

usually fulminate against the more obvious social vices, which are very well summed up in the three—lust, anger and greed, and an attempt is made to battle against these without appropriate weapons, and with the almost invariable result of failure. They must be meditated upon in the light of the three fundamental vices, and all the vigour of life that they contain, which gives them their savour, must be retained, but allied with new developments. Thus the greed of the unscrupulous and vigorous millionaire will gradually change its face not by his indiscriminate distribution of his fortune and retiring to a monastery, but by his using his vice for the prosperity of his neighbours. Then gradually as he finds the joy of life in seeing their happiness, his new-born sympathies will gradually percolate into all his smaller dealings and purify his life, so that when his services are employed for the common good he will be a potent force for the benefit of all.

Behind this analysis of virtues and vices lies an important philosophical and spiritual truth. There is no vice in man, and the perfect man approaches our highest clear conception of the character of God. What does distinguish our degrees of imperfection is the fact that we are always losing and forgetting ourselves. We are deluded into the acceptance of a false personality, like a man who, never having known his own form by its appearance in a mirror, is suddenly brought before one of those fattening and distorting mirrors which one finds in exhibitions, and imagining himself to be truly portrayed therein, acts according to his delusion. But we have always some inkling of our real spiritual selves, and this leaves a seed of discontent within us which will not allow us to be satisfied for long with the distorted personality and its apparent needs. One has only to analyse one's conception of oneself to see how utterly external and ludicrous it is. In our modern life perhaps it is the opinions of our neighbours which provide most of the clay and paint for this absurd idol.

We hear what our friends say about us—that we are ugly or handsome, foolish or wise, ignorant or learned, competent or incompetent, significant or insignificant—and out of this mass of mirror-images we gradually compact as the years of childhood and youth roll by, a whole mass of varied and often inconsistent material around that centre of consciousness which is the spiritual self. All true effort in the building of character aims beneath this personality to the realisation of one's own spiritual self and the development of powers in the character so that they shine through the personality and change it, and we become Ourselves even in this mortal and delusive life. Insomuch as we act with spiritual motives even in this life of the personality we are the immortal Higher Self.

## CHAPTER XXI

## ULTIMATE AIM

IT is one of the difficulties of self-determined progress that you cannot see very far into the future, and the future that you now decide upon must be tainted with your present imperfection of judgment. It is not possible to draw up in advance every detail of your building of character as an architect would specify beforehand the detailed features of a house to be built. Nevertheless, general principles of progress require that your building shall be done deliberately, as in the building of a house. For that you would take each piece of material, prepare it or shape it and then carefully fix it in its proper place, and that must be done also in this case. You have the satisfaction, however, that as the work proceeds the plan can be constantly altered and improved, so that its final form will be more glorious than anything now imaginable. It must of course be fully realised that no barrier to this work is to be contemplated. Many people imagine that death will put an end to their work, but in this process death must not count at all as it is of practically no importance whatever. Whatever the future may be, it depends entirely upon the present, and is bound to lead ever onward and upward according to spiritual principles, and spiritual principles are as clearly discernible to us in the physical world as they are likely to be in any other. Indeed, insomuch as we are true to ourselves, we are spiritual beings even now, and what there is of spirituality has unfolded itself from the seed within us that is destined to carry on its conscious evolution to inconceivable perfections.

and powers. Character grows only from within, though it absorbs as it does so what it needs from without.

The difficulty of present ignorance is not so great as it at first may seem, for there are several very distinct guides—finger-posts such as we find for example in the science of the emotions, and guiding stars such as the glimpses of intuitions described in Chapter III. By noting the ideal that you have in your best moments, when the mind is free from agitation, and aiming at that ideal at other times when it may be difficult to keep it in view and in conduct, you certainly will evoke from within yourself what is best and also absorb what is best from that outer world.

It is impossible to overestimate the value for practical purposes of the knowledge of the three lines of human progress through knowledge, love and work. They point the direct road to the transition from material to spiritual desires. There is no human being void of desire, but these desires fall into two distinct classes, the material and the spiritual.

Material desires lead to pleasure and pain, both of which are very transient, but spiritual desires lead to happiness, which is an attribute of the divine, and is permanent or infinite. For this reason happiness is one of the best guides to progress. When there is real permanent progress there is happiness or joy. When you feel pain there is something wrong with you, not with the world. Pain checks and corrects—is only a reaction from one of your positive vices, and its business in the world is to tell you, very forcibly if need be, that you are going off the right track. It demands that you shall think, love or act, as the case may require. It insists upon you using your powers for spiritual ends. It is thus a friend to save you from any possibility of a downward path. Even your pleasures soon pass away, and if you persist in them after the material desire has faded they will turn to pain. It is wisdom, therefore, not to shun these things with any sort of fear, but to draw from the pleasure and pain the lessons that they

can teach, or rather to accept from them the guidance that they have to offer. It may be that you suffer pain because you have been lazy or thoughtless or selfish; now is the time to find out which of these it is and set yourself on the right road for the future.

With happiness the case is different. It rises out of the exercise of all our three qualities—in other words, from work done with thought or love. Take the case of the unselfish artist; his work never palls upon him. Or the case of a scientist pursuing his thought for the benefit of mankind; he enjoys happiness not pleasure, and happiness never falls away. Take the case of the simple villager who toils in the fields, applying his rude knowledge for the benefit of his family and village; he enjoys happiness. There are thousands of avenues of happiness in human life but in every case it will be found that it is the fruit of spiritual desires which require the union of work, thought and love.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE GREAT LAW

IT has been made clear in the earlier chapters of this book that man cannot get on without faith—sometimes it is the faith which makes him place his trust in nature, like the lilies of the field ; sometimes it makes him trust in his own intelligence working in the universe of invariable law which is perfectly intelligible ; sometimes it makes him trust in the triumph of right in a universe instinct with moral law.

Long before man understands the intelligibility of the universe, he exercises reason, and long before he sees how justice is done he realises by spiritual perception that the spiritual law has arranged for it. Every one has a not unnatural desire for justice, and the great law which governs the world provides for its satisfaction, as it does for the satisfaction of the intellectual nature and the emotions. There is perfect justice in all outside happenings between man and man, and between man and God. But people must not estimate justice by their feelings, but by what is best for the person concerned.

It is therefore desirable in the practice of character-building to accept all things that come as from the hand of God. If an illness or a great difficulty arises, do not resent it and wish it were not there, but realise that it is the thing that you most need, or in this moral world it would not have come to you. You must tackle the situation with vigour and courage, with thought and with a cheerful and loving heart. Overcome it if you think it should be overcome ; submit to it if you think that

that is the best course for the development of character ; but in every case look it straight in the face and determine that you will get from it what it has the power to give. On the other hand, take care when things that are pleasant come your way, wealth, influence, praise or fame, good health, beauty. These are as dangerous as the other things, and no more really desirable, unless you have the strength of character (in all its three departments) to cope with them without injury to yourself and others. One who would tread this path must realise the delusive nature of pleasure and pain, and he will find, though it must sound strange to those who have not yet experienced it, that there is abundant happiness to be derived from both.

Non-resentment is therefore the key to success. It is a general principle that anything in the nature of agitation obliterates the powers of character as long as it lasts, and resentment is a form of agitation of the most persistent type. It is true that there are things to be battled against, but not with hatred, anxiety and resentment. In this world, where everything comes direct from the hand of God, it often happens that our enemy is in reality our best friend. There is nothing in the whole world that you cannot use for the development of character. Believe therefore in the triumph of right, and lead the spiritual life even in this world.

One department of non-resentment is the abstention from blaming others. Praise is also a very doubtful activity, for it implies that you consider yourself a judge, and really all praise of others is essentially self-praise. But blame is more dangerous because it generally accompanies more agitation. You get annoyed because other people do not do what you think they ought to do. Intellectual criticism of others is useful, because it is part of the study of human nature, but the habit of emotional criticism wastes the energy that you need for your own work. It is always a safe thing to study with respect those who

differ from you for they have probably acquired some thing that you have overlooked.

In the life of Yudhishtira, one of the Hindu epic heroes, there is an excellent illustration of these principles. King Yudhishtira was a very righteous man, but a little weak in some directions, and when he was challenged to a game of dice by his uncle Shakuni he did not like to refuse the game because it was contrary to the conventions of his class and time. He grew excited with the gambling, and Shakuni, who was a clever trickster, led him on until his kingdom and everything else that he possessed was lost. This led to a dispute which ended in the Great War of the Bharatas and brought upon Yudhishtira the most terrible trials. After the war, when Yudhishtira had lost all his brothers and friends and was wandering in a lonely place with no one but a dog whom he had made his friend, a Deva appeared to him and told him that it was time for him to come away and enjoy the bliss of high heaven; but obstinate through all arguments and pleading he refused to leave the animal which depended upon him. At this the dog turned into a glorious Deva, Yudhishtira was declared to have shown great strength of character, and all three ascended to the high heaven. Arrived there, Yudhishtira looked round for his brothers and friends, and finding them not there began to insist that it was impossible for him to enjoy the bliss of heaven until he was assured that those he loved were enjoying it too. His companions led him to a darkened place where he could hear the groans of his brothers, and when he learned what they were he refused to leave the abode of misery, but preferred to remain to try to comfort them. Once more the scene changed and Yudhishtira found himself enjoying the bliss of heaven with those whom he had loved. Yudhishtira had been transformed from a good, weak man into a good, strong man through the gambling of Shakuni, the cheat. As Sri Krishna said: "I am the gambling of the cheat."

It is time to give up wishing, which implies failure, and to learn to see truly and apply both will and love. When that is done, the whole universe will change its face towards you, and it will not be long before you enter a higher and more spiritual state of being, to which our human condition is but an early apprenticeship.



